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NEW YORK JOURNAL

AND ADVERTISER

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TRUTH ABOUT OTIS'S CENSORSHIP AS TOLD BY JOURNAL, CONFIRMED.

Associated Press's Correspondent at Manila Writes a Full Account to His Manager of the Way the News Is Forcibly Suppressed by the Philippine General.

CONFIRMATION is given in the strongest manner to the letters of James Creelman to the Journal concerning the misconduct of the campaign in the Philippines, the maladministration of General Elwell S. Otis and the censorship over reports sent to the American newspapers. This confirmation is contained in a private letter from Robert M. Collins, one of the correspondents at Manila of the Associated Press, written to Melville E. Stone, general manager of the Associated Press, in response to a request sent by cable for a full explanation of the facts that led up to the action of the correspondents at Manila in preparing and issuing the celebrated "round robin."

Copies of the letter of Mr. Collins were sent to the several directors of the Associated Press. One of the directors is the editor of the Pittsburg Post, who decided that the matter it contained, save some matters not proper for publication, should be printed. Following is the letter:

MANILA, P. I., July 30, 1899.—Melville E. Stone, General Manager of the Associated Press, Chicago, U. S. A.:

My Dear Mr. Stone—Your request for a detailed record of all circumstances leading to the statement cabled to the newspapers by all the correspondents in Manila is just received. In the beginning it should be explained that correspondents had the question of taking some united action to secure the right to send the facts about the war, or, failing in that, to explain to our papers and the public why we were not telling the facts, two months before the cablegram was received.

The censorship enforced during the war and before the beginning of it, was, according to newspaper men who had worked in Japan, Turkey, Greece, Egypt and Russia in war times, and in Cuba under the Weyler regime, and during our war so much more stringent than any hitherto attempted that we were astonished that the American authorities should countenance it, and were confident public opinion would be overwhelmingly against it, if its methods and purposes became known.

Submitted After Many Appeals.

For a long time we submitted to the censorship because of appeals to our patriotism and a feeling that we might be accused of a lack thereof if we made any trouble for the American authorities here.

But when General Otis came down in the frank admission that it was not intended so much to prevent the newspapers from giving information and assistance to the enemy (the legitimate function, and, according to our view, the only legitimate one, of a censorship), but to keep the knowledge of conditions here from the public at home, and when the censor had repeatedly told us in ruling out plain statements of undisputed facts, "My instructions are to let nothing go that can hurt the Administration," we concluded that protest was justifiable.

Otis had gained the idea from the long submission by the newspaper men to his dictation that it was a part of the duty of the Governor-General to direct the newspaper correspondents as he did his officers. Much of the censorship was conducted by him personally, the censor sending a correspondent to the General with any dispatches about which he had doubts. The process of passing a message was identical with the correction of a composition by a schoolmaster. Otis or the censor striking out what displeased them and inserting what they thought should be said, or, what came to the same thing, telling the correspondent he must say certain things if his story was to go.

Press Made Otis's Personal Organ.

In this way the entire American press was made the personal organ of Otis; we were compelled to send nothing but the official version of all events and conditions, even when the official version controverted the opinions of the great mass of the officers in the field and of intelligent residents, and was a falsification of events which passed before our eyes.

In this way every fight became a glorious American victory, even though every one in the army knew it to have been substantially a failure, and we were drilled into writing, quite mechanically, wholly ridiculous estimates of the numbers of Filipinos killed.

Repeated appeals made by all the correspondents to their papers to secure change in censorship methods had been fruitless, and as conditions steadily grew worse and failure was piled up on failure, while we were sending rose-colored pictures of successful war and inhabitants flocking to the American standard, the repeated suggestions of correspondents that "We must do something" resulted in a formal meeting.

The Work Made a Farce.

All agreed that their work was being made a farce, the papers were wasting money in keeping them here, that Otis might as well detail some of his clerks to do the work. Each had his own idea of what should be done. I proposed they protest to the President against the censorship, with the request that all matter should be passed except military movements which would assist the enemy, and I thought it had better be signed by the names of the organizations and papers represented than by our names, because their display might be construed into a desire for personal advertisement. The others thought we should send a statement of the conditions, with an explanation to the public why our reports had been so misleading.

On comparing notes we found that we had among us learned the views of all the American generals and most of the other prominent men in Manila whose opinions were worth considering, and that there was a practical unanimity of opinions of the situation. The dispatch prepared was an epitome of these opinions. The pressure upon us to "tell the truth" from army officers of high rank and men of all classes had been something tremendous, and we have been accused of cowardice and all sorts of things. Before taking any steps we concluded to talk with Otis, and he made vague promises of greater liberality.

Another Month of Torture.

Then followed a month of history repeating itself. Before the movement on Antipolo, Taypay and Morong we were told that it must inevitably result in the capture and destruction of Pilar's army of two or three thousand men; then the same predictions were made of the movement to the south in Cavite Province; next the collapse was about to come through the surrender of General Tries, who would bring over his army.

About the middle of June I wrote a conservative review to the effect that every one here was convinced that it would be impossible to end the war during the rainy season and for some time thereafter, unless heavy reinforcements were sent.

THE CENSOR'S COMMENT (I MADE NOTE OF IT) WAS: "OF COURSE, WE ALL KNOW THAT WE ARE IN A TERRIBLE MESS OUT HERE, BUT WE DON'T WANT THE PEOPLE TO GET EXCITED ABOUT IT. IF YOU FELLOWS WILL ONLY KEEP QUIET NOW WE WILL PULL THROUGH IN TIME WITHOUT ANY FUSS AT HOME."

HE TOOK THE REVIEW TO GENERAL OTIS, WHO SAID: "TELL COLLINS THAT IF HE WILL HOLD THAT FOR A WEEK OR TEN DAYS HE WILL THANK ME FOR NOT LETTING HIM SEND IT."

Otis Repeated Same Story.

When I went to see him he repeated the same old story about the insurrection going to pieces, and hinted so portentously about having wonderful things up his sleeve that I almost believed him. The other men had practically the same experience.

So, after waiting a month for the General's predictions to materialize, we decided to send the statement we had framed without changing it, as the conditions had not changed.

The views were the views of Lawton, MacArthur, Funston, Wheaton, et al, and we could not be accused of prejudice against the Administration. The attempt to hold the newspapers by the throat was so unusual that unusual action seemed to be justified and demanded. As a matter of form

we took the message to the censor. His comment was practically the same that he had made on my message. He did not question the accuracy of the statement of conditions, but said: "This is just the sort of matter the censorship is intended to suppress."

Committee Chosen to See Otis.

He, of course, took it to Otis, who, in turn, sent the messenger requesting Davis, of the New York Sun, to go and see him, doubtless thinking that as he had treated the Sun as his organ, and its correspondents being under obligations to him for special favors, he could work them to give up the plan. Thompson said he thought Collins and McCutcheon should go also. A committee was chosen—Davis, McCutcheon, Bass and I.

When we were ushered into Otis's room he said with some anger:

"GENTLEMEN, YOU HAVE SERVED AN EXTRAORDINARY PAPER UPON ME. YOU ACCUSE ME OF FALSEHOOD. THIS CONSTITUTES A CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. I WILL HAVE YOU TRIED BY A GENERAL COURT-MARTIAL AND LET YOU CHOOSE THE JUDGES."

We knew from experience with threats to "put you off the island" that there was nothing to be frightened about, and also knew that all officers who would be on a court-martial would know we told the truth. Three hours of exceedingly plain talk followed.

The General did not contradict our statements that the purpose of the censorship was to keep the facts from the public, but said that what we wanted was to have the people stirred up and make sensations for the papers. We told him that there had never been any subject furnishing more good material for sensations than this war, and that he should be exceedingly grateful to the papers for handling it so temperately.

In that connection we reminded him that the stories of looting in soldiers' letters home had been little, if any, exaggerated. Davis and Bass told him they had personally seen our soldiers bayoneting the wounded, and I reminded him that the cutting off of the ears of two American soldiers at Dasmariñas had been merely retaliation for similar mutilations of dead Filipinos by the Americans.

We told him that we had refrained from sending these things and others of similar nature because we did not wish to make sensations.

Dealing with the specifications, we said that the hospital officers refused to give us any information as to the number of sick, on the ground that he had instructed them to withhold such facts; also that he had reported to Washington a percentage of 7½ sick, when he surgeons agreed that at least 20 per cent of the command was sick; that not more than 10 per cent of some regiments were fit for duty, and that the hospital force and room was entirely inadequate, so that they were compelled to discharge hundreds of men who were really sick.

Said Soldiers Were Shirking.

His reply was that the hospitals were full of perfectly well men who were shirking, and should be turned out. To send home figures of the numbers in hospitals would be entirely misleading.

We reminded him that while he had been reporting to Washington that "The volunteers will render willing service until relieved," the same volunteers were sending regimental petitions to the Governors of their States to use every influence to secure their recall.

In the matter of prejudice against the navy, it was stated on the part of the correspondents that all were compelled to change their accounts of the taking of Iloilo, to make it appear that the army had done the work with immediate assistance from war ships, and that only a few houses were burned. The unquestioned facts told in the original stories were that the soldiers did not land until three hours after the marines had raised the flag and chased the insurgents out.

General Otis explained that the navy was so anxious for glory that it disobeyed instructions by landing before the proper time, etc., although the correspondents could not have been permitted to send that explanation had they known it, and were forced to give in a false account of what occurred. The fact is questioned by no one that almost all of the business quarter and much of the other sections were burned.

I reminded him that two stories by Dunning, of the Associated Press, describing the work of the navy in patrolling the coasts and taking prizes were "killed" without reason, and the others agreed that the entire attitude of the censorship toward the navy had been one of prejudice and discrimination.

There seemed to be a childish fear that the navy would get some advertising. The censor and Otis himself always made us refer to the gunboats operated by Captain Grant as "army gunboats" in their eagerness to keep the navy from getting any credit not its due.

Otis is a very hard man to argue with or to pin down to any definite proposition, and his explanation of the failure of Hall's expedition the first week in June was characteristic. He said: "But how could we capture them when they were not there? They all got out the night before we started, and there were not two thousand we found, but only six hundred."

We rehearsed in detail the objections to the censorship, which I have outlined in the beginning of this letter.

Davis said: "When I returned to Manila I asked what I would be permitted to send, and you told me all facts, news about military operations not helpful to the enemy, and my opinions as opinions."

All of the committee agreed that the fulfillment of that rule would be satisfactory, and I disclaimed any desire to send my personal opinions for the Associated Press.

General Bates was present throughout the interview. At the close General Otis turned to him and asked:

"What would you do with these gentlemen, General?"

Bates promptly replied: "I would do what I said."

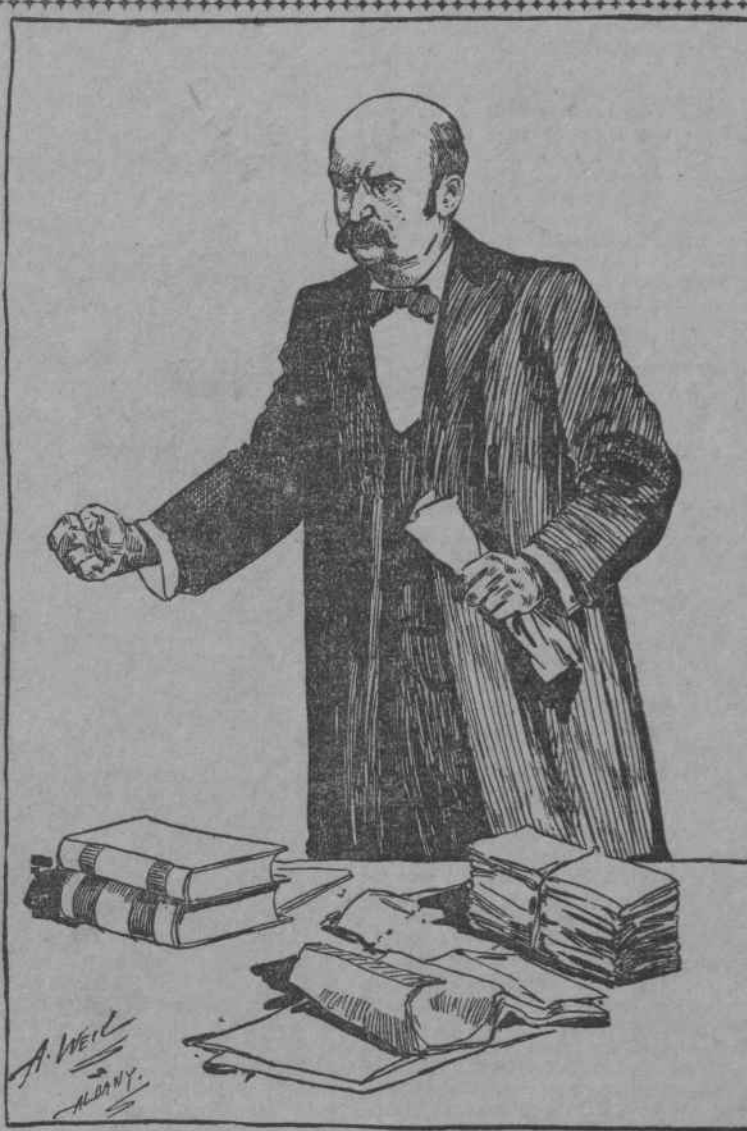
"Court-martial them?" Otis asked.

"No, let them send what you promised—the facts and opinions as opinions," Bates said.

The next morning Otis sent for Davis and tried to talk him over. Among other things, he complained that he did not clearly understand what we wanted. Wishing to give him a chance to establish a reasonable censorship, we sent another committee with a written request that we be allowed to send all facts not useful to the enemy and describe the different views of the situation when it was open to difference of opinion. The committee threshed over the same ground several hours, and the result was a statement in effect that we might send anything which in his opinion was "not prejudicial to the interests of the United States."

That did not change our position in the least, because he had always construed as damaging to the Government any story tending to carry the smallest inference that his acts and policies were not entirely successful and endorsed by the whole army. He also appointed a new censor, although we told him that would not be the slightest relief unless the system was changed, and he promised to keep the censor fully posted on all events—an arrangement which he has not carried into execution.

HILL FLAYS RAMAPO GRAB; FEEBLE RESPONSE HEARD.



Former Senator Hill Addressing the Attorney-General.

MR. HILL TELLS THE JOURNAL OF THE PROSPECTS OF ULTIMATE TRIUMPH.

To the Editor of the Journal:

There were no surprises at the hearing before the Attorney-General to-day in the Ramapo matter, except the unexpected weakness of the company's case.

A water company which has no assets, nor any water, nor any reservoirs, pipes or other facilities for the furnishing of water, nor any contracts of any substance or value, and has never instituted any proceedings for the condemnation of streams or real estate, and has never transacted any corporate or other business except the attempt to perpetrate a tremendous swindle on the taxpayers of New York City, is a mere paper organization, which will be dissolved by the courts.

If the Attorney-General, in the exercise of his sole discretion, consents to allow a proper action to be brought, a legal victory for the people and the Vigilance Committee may be reasonably expected in the near future.

DAVID B. HILL.

Albany, Sept. 7, 1899.

MERRITT FOR THE PHILIPPINES.

Friends of General Miles Urging the President to Send Him, Too, and a Big Fight Is Now On.

Washington, Sept. 7.—After forty-eight hours of almost constant discussion among the President, Secretary Root, Professor Schurman, Senator Beveridge, General Miles and Adjutant-General Corbin, it may be stated positively to-night that General Merritt will go to the Philippines.

The President's friends want General Miles to go also. Adjutant-General Corbin strongly opposes Miles's detail to that point. Secretary Root urges an immediate decision. A conclusion must be reached within forty-eight hours.

General Merritt prefers to go alone. He does not want a ranking Major General at the same post. General Miles contends that all the general officers now in this country should be sent to the Philippines, because they are needed there.

While Merritt is sure to go and Brigadier-Generals Anderson, Henry, Merritt and Wade are almost equally certain to be sent there, the doubt exists about Miles. Should Miles be held here the official excuse will be that the army headquarters should not be transferred to the borders of China.

To-night the President is almost leaning toward the Miles side. The friends of General Miles cannot understand why there should be any doubt as to the wisdom of his being sent. His personal and official staff is already being provisionally selected. General Miles refused to-day to confirm or deny the reports in regard to his departure for Manila.

Whether Merritt goes alone or Miles goes with him, both of these generals favor the presence in the field of General Brooke and the other general officers of the army. When Secretary Root's attention was called to the rumor that it had been determined to open the campaign against the rebels about October 1, fully a month before the time heretofore understood, he practically affirmed the statement and gave the second interview he has granted since he has taken hold.

STRIKERS' RIGHTS UPHELD IN COURT

They Can Use Peaceful Means to Prevent the Filling of Places—Injunction Dissolved—Important Victory for the Iron Moulders.

Albany, Sept. 7.—A decision which is a victory for union labor has been rendered by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court now sitting at Saratoga.

In effect the court holds that individual members of unions have the right to take peaceful measures to prevent others from taking places during a strike. The decision is in favor of Iron Moulders' Union No. 12, and other labor organizations located in Troy, in the action brought against them by William Slescher, Jr., and William N. Slescher.

The appeal was brought by James Grogan, as president of the Moulders' Union. The decision reverses an order of Justice Chester, granted January 14, 1899, which made permanent a preliminary injunction restraining the union men from interfering or interfering with the business of William Slescher, Jr., and William N. Slescher, iron founders, of Watervliet, by force, threats or intimidation.

Only the JOURNAL prints all the Auction Sales—advertised on page 11

SALES

Journal's Proceeding Against the Gigantic Water Corporation Argued Before the Attorney-General.



Former Senator Says He Would Trust Providence Rather Than This Company to Keep Off Water Famine.

Its Promoters Have Only a Paper Organization, and They Can Give No Excuse for Its Existence.

Albany, Sept. 7.—Arguments on the proceeding begun by the Journal to annul the charter of the Ramapo Water Company were concluded before the Attorney-General to-day.

Both sides were heard at length. Former Senator David B. Hill presented the case of the Journal. Henry L. Scheuerman, a partner of Edward Lauterbach, appeared in behalf of the company. It was a notable proceeding.

Lawyers agree that it will furnish a precedent that, as long as the present laws exist, will serve as a guide in similar contests.

Attorney-General Davies was fair and patient. He gave the lawyers all the time and latitude they wanted. He displayed much knowledge of corporation law, and by his questions helped to bring out the points and make them clear. This was of much service to the Journal. It was frequently embarrassing to the Ramapo Company.

Room Filled with Lawyers. The big square room where the hearing was held was filled with lawyers and State officials who have to do with legal matters. Beside Mr. Hill sat Bernard Naumberg, of Einstein & Townsend, the Journal's lawyers. Aiding Mr. Scheuerman were Herbert R. Limburger and Frank White, who is an authority writer on corporation law.

Mr. Hill was at his best. His argument consisted of an array of facts that followed each other with lightning-like rapidity and with telling force. He held up the Ramapo Company as a myth, a thing that existed only on paper, that was inclined to hatch a plot, that was a menace to the people, that violated every law it could violate. He insisted that it had forfeited its right to longer life.

He denounced the men who sought to fasten \$200,000,000 on the taxpayers of New York, and said that while they are not on trial now they might be later.

He referred to the big mass meeting in New York as a guarantee that the proceeding was begun in good faith.

In brief, he touched on every point, swept the whole fabric of the case and laid bare all of the facts so far as any man knows them now. In conclusion, he expounded Senator Platt and the Senator's friends and practically laid the responsibility of the whole matter at the door of Tammany Hall.

Ramapo's Evidence Feeble. Mr. Scheuerman did the best he could with a case that was clearly very weak. The evidence he presented at the outset was so feeble as to create the suspicion that he was concealing his strength till the last. But his case was never strong. The Attorney-General had to prompt him to "Please get to your facts."

Once Mr. Hill cried: "Why do they send a lawyer here who knows nothing about the facts of the case?" This may have been unjust. Mr. Scheuerman's chief difficulty may have been in knowing too many facts. He denied that there was any proof that the company had suspended business for a year. He denied that the contract was sprung on the public. He denied specifically a few of the facts set forth by Mr. Hill. All of the others he denied in a bunch.

Each side will submit briefs within five days. The Attorney-General's decision may be expected in about three weeks. If he decides against the company, suit will be brought in the courts to annul the company's charter. The matter now rests with the Attorney-General.

Address of Mr. Hill.

Mr. Hill's speech presenting the facts of the case was as follows: "If the Attorney-General please, a short time since the people of the city of New York were informed that on the day after